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ABSTRACT

The Simmons College Career Planning and Counseling Center is a training site for counseling psychology interns who want to gain experience in counseling late adolescent and adult women. This paper describes the model for training counselors of women, developed at Simmons College. The development of the program is discussed, and the four goals of the program are presented: (1) teaching developmental theories and their application to the psychology of women; (2) translating psychological theories into counseling practices: (3) training for sex-fair counseling practices: and (4) examining counselor attitudes toward women as clients. The staff of the program is described as is the selection of interns from masters, doctoral and postdoctoral students in counseling and psychology of women. Implementation of the model is elaborated in terms of clinical practice, training, and supervision, three areas in which interns spend 20 hours per week. Training activities, consisting of Staff Seminar, Outreach Training, and Process Group, and individual and group supervision activities are discussed. Preliminary evalutions of the training program and recommendations for the future are presented. (NRB)

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AN INTERNSHIP MODEL FOR TRAINING COUNSELORS OF WOMEN

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Paper presented at the "Committee on Women", American Psychological Association, Montreal, Canada, September, 1980.

The Simmons College Career Planning and Counseling Center is a training site for counseling psychology interns who want to gain experience in counseling late adolescent and adult women. The Counseling Center provides psychological services to 2800 women who are undergraduate and graduate students at Simmons College. Counseling Center services include individual and group counseling, psychological education programming, and consultations to faculty and staff of the college.

Since the early 1970s, interns have come to the Counseling Center from Boston-area graduate programs. These programs, which provide the academic component of graduate training, vary widely in their theoretical orientations and in their understanding and teaching of women's development. The interns, themselves, enter the training program with different life experiences and different understandings about women, development, and consequent appropriate therapeutic goals. The variety of attitudes toward women among the trainees and the range of psychological orientations of academic programs create a rich diversity in the intern group at the Counseling Center.

Until 1978, weekly individual supervision was the only training provided for interns. The supervisors were two full-time and two part-time staff members who provided supervision on short and long term counseling, program development, and consultation. The nature of the training experience was, to a great degree, dependent on the knowledge, skills and attitudes of each intern's individual supervisor. The supervisors had little opportunity for sharing theoretical and practical issues in supervising counselors of women.

In 1978 I began to develop a model for training counselors of women which would provide a coherent and substantial framework for the work of the Counseling Center trainees and staff. The rationale for this work was two-fold. First, it was clear that academic institutions were not able to provide adequate training for students in translating theory to clinical practice in counseling women. Secondly, it was evident that the staff members of the Counseling Center could profit from a program which would encourage an examination of their failures and successes in supervising and training counselors of women. The opportunity existed at Simmons College to provide an extensive and intensive training program in which divergent theories of psychological development could be synthesized and translated to practice with women.

The Training Program

Developmental psychology provides the theoretical rationale for the training program. Interns are trained in developmental principles and theories, and their translation to practice with college women.

The goals of the program are:

* teaching of developmental theories and their application to the psychology of women

* translation of psychological theories of women's development to counseling practice

* training in sex-fair counseling practices as described by American Psychological Association's Division of Counseling Psychology (17)

* examination of counselor attitudes, biases and values, toward women as clients

The intent of the program is to promote the personal and professional development of the interns themselves. The training is designed to challenge and stimulate the development of the interns through their examination of both cognitive and affective learnings. Each segment of the program integrates the didactic with the experiential, the theoretical with the practical, and the professional with the personal experiences of the interns. We believe that by fostering their personal and professional development, we will enhance and promote their competence as counselors of women.

The Staff

The staff of the Counseling Center consists of three full time counselors. Two staff members are licensed psychologists, one having diplomate status, who have extensive experience in working with women in both college and private practice settings. The third member of our staff is presently completing her doctoral dissertation.

We are from divergent backgrounds. As Director of Training and Associate Director of the Counseling Center, I have a special interest in developmental theory-particularly as it applies to the psychological education of women. Jonathan Ehrenworth, the Director of the Center, brings a psychoanalytic perspective to our work. Lourdes Rodríguez-Nogués, has a special interest in minority populations and the processes of acculturation.

We believe that it is important that we, as a staff, provide models for integration of the training goals, listed above, into professional behaviors. We have, therefore, derived the following goals for staff interaction to be achieved through weekly staff meetings:

* a commitment to learning, understanding, and synthesizing psychological theories of women's development

* an acceptance of our diverse styles and skills in translating these theories to practice

* an examination of issues of power, competition and conflict

* an examination of our own attitudes, biases and values, about self in relation to women

The Interns

The intern training program accepts applications from masters, doctoral and postdoctoral candidates in counseling and psychology. All applicants are required to demonstrate experience in individual and/or group counseling, program development and implementation, and self-directed learning. Interviews are held with all qualified applicants to identify their theoretical orientations, strengths and weaknesses in clinical practice, and their perceptions of women in society today. Six trainees (approximately 20% of the 1980 applicants) are chosen for the training group.

The principle guiding the formation of the training group is that when differences exist which are valued within a group, interaction produces challenge and growth. Therefore, interns are chosen on the basis of their differences in theoretical and personal orientations toward psychology and women and their perceived potential to work and learn together as they examine those differences.

Training groups have varied. The 1979-80 group was composed of women and men who demonstrated the required diversity of orientations but who were, by in large, beginning counselors. The 1980-81 group is composed of women whose self-descriptions range from "fairly traditional" to "radical feminist". Their theoretical orientation include psychoanalytic, gestalt, and social learning. All members of the 1980-81 group have had extensive clinical experience in colleges, community mental health centers, hospitals, and private practice.

Interns in training are required to spend at least 20 hours each week at the Counseling Center. The following table describes intern hours spent weekly in clinical practice, training, and supervision.

Clinical Practice		Training		Supervision	
Direct Service	8	Staff Seminar	1½	Individual	1
Outreach Program	3½	Outreach Training	1½	Group	1½
Research	2	Process Group	1		
	13½		4		2½

The following sections will describe the training and supervisory activities, listed above, and ways in which developmental principles have guided both the content and the process of our training program.

Training

Components of the training are the Staff Seminar, Outreach Training and the Process Group. Each of these components will be described in this section.

Staff Seminar. The interns and staff meet weekly to examine theories of women's development and the translation of these theories to the practice of short term counseling with women at Simmons College. Four activities have been designed to achieve this goal:

* presentation and discussion of theories of development
* examination of the relevance of theoretical assumptions to women at Simmons College
* identification of the effects of counselor values, attitudes and biases on women clients
* description of innovative counseling techniques which promote development in women

Our commitment to a developmental framework at the Counseling Center is reflected in our commitment to promoting the professional development of the interns as counselors of women. Therefore, we have described four conditions for professional growth which guide the process of the Staff Seminar.

* intellectual stimulation through exposure to conflicting points of view on women's development

* cognitive and affective exploration of the effects of socialization on one's personal and professional role as a counselor of women

* participation in an environment which supports diversity and models role flexibility

* shared responsibility for the integration of theoretical and practical learnings

The curriculum of the seminar, described below, is divided into three modules. Module One, weeks 1-14, examines developmental theory and its reflection in counseling practice with young adults. Module Two, weeks 15-20, focuses on counselors' attitudes as they affect clinical practice. Module Three, weeks 21-30, integrates theoretical and practical learnings through research.

Module One examines developmental theory in practice. Introductory sessions describe the goals and objectives of the seminar, required readings (listed at the end of this paper), and general principles which underlie developmental psychology. The content of the module is organized around the developmental tasks of adolescent and young adult women. These tasks include the development of emotional independence from parents and other adults, peer relationships, sexual identity and expression, intimacy and occupational choice.

Each of the above six tasks is studied separately through staff discussion and a case presentation. I. Examples from the counseling practice of staff and interns are presented which describe clients' progress in managing the developmental task (e.g. developing peer relationship). These examples are discussed by the staff in the light of three theoretical perspectives (psychoanalytic, cognitive developmental, social conditioning). The group compares and contrasts these theoretical perspectives and examines the implications of using any one theory for assessment, intervention, and evaluation in counseling practice. II. Following this discussion, an intern presents a case describing, in depth, a client's status relevant to one of the six developmental tasks listed above. The case discussion focuses on the theoretical and value-laden assumptions underlying the counseling goals and strategies and sets the stage for the second module.

Module Two is designed to provide an examination of the effect of values and attitudes on practice in counseling women. The content of the module is determined by the attitudes and assumptions of the training

group toward women. Structured exercises used in the past have addressed some of the "hidden agendas" in counseling: the exercise of counselor power and responsibility, sex role stereotyping, and the effects of ethnicity and culture on women's development. Following each structured exercise, individuals are helped to understand how their views of women influence their counseling practices. The information gained from the structured exercise then become the content of supervisory sessions.

Module Three examines the application of developmental theory to practice. The task of the third module is for each intern to formulate, implement and evaluate a research project which examines how theoretical assumptions of women's development influence counseling practice. The research may be descriptive or experimental. It must, however, provide new directions in the practice of counseling women. Research results and implications for theory and practice in the psychology of women are incorporated in the staff training for the following year.

The content of the staff seminar will change as we become more knowledgeable about the developmental issues of our college population, as we describe these issues in a theoretical framework and as we identify counseling practices which promote the development of women clients. The content of the seminar will also vary with the stages of professional development of our interns. The success of the staff seminar will be measured by our contributions to the theory of women's development and counseling practices with women.

Outreach Training. Interns and staff meet weekly to discuss the interaction of the college as an institution and the developmental issues of its women students. Members of the administration, faculty, and staff of the college meet with the training group to describe the organization and institutional policies of the college. These discussions focus on how the college as an institution affects student development. Problem areas are identified for further consultation, programs or workshops.

Interns are trained in consultation and programming skills so that they may assist the institution in meeting the needs of its women students. The interns apply these skills in three outreach programs of the Counseling Center: consultations with residence hall staff, workshops designed to address issues of college women, and consultations and programs of the committees on Minority Women and Human Sexuality.

Process Group. This group meets for one hour each week and is led by the interns themselves. Their task is to learn about themselves as women (and men) in a group and to explore the ways in which they work and learn together.

Supervision

Weekly individual and group supervision is focused on the interns' clinical work. Each intern has a caseload of eight clients in short-term therapy. All counseling sessions are taped, and these tapes, as well as

process notes and summaries, are used by the trainees to present their cases. Assessment and intervention procedures and skills in short term counseling presented are discussed.

The goal of supervision is to enable the trainees to explore the validity of content and process learnings gained through the training program in their work with women clients. They are urged to translate theoretical frameworks of psychological development to the lives of their clients. They are sensitized to how the client's issues as a woman reflect and affect their own. Their own experiences with mothers, daughters, lovers and friends are addressed as they examine their counseling with women.

Summary

Preliminary evaluations of the training program have suggested ways in which we might capitalize on our strengths in order to set our goals for the future. Our strength as a training site lies in our ability to bring together psychologists with a variety of orientations and skills who are committed to the task of defining and synthesizing theories of women's development and translating these theories to counseling practice. Our future lies in the identification of practices in training counselors of women and their application to other training sites.

1. The interaction of the staff provides a challenging learning environment. Within the staff group we differ on variables of sex, ethnicity, theoretical orientation and counseling practice. We are committed to the task of using these differences in exploring their relevance to our work with women. Within our group we must, of necessity, examine the influence of our own socialization patterns and biased values on our behaviors and thinking. We are aware of the importance of attracting trainees (men and minority women) who reflect our differences and share in our learning.

2. The Career Planning and Counseling Center is a free standing training site, attracting students from a variety of graduate programs. Trainees who are committed to working with women come to share their diverse theoretical orientations and to synthesize theories with practice. In addition, we plan to identify the training program as a gathering place for professional psychologists who wish to share their particular experiences and interests in counseling women. We welcome their participation in our program as teachers, consultants and researchers.

3. The setting of the training program in a women's college provides an ideal environment for examining the translation of theory to practice in the psychology of women. We continue to investigate psychological theories of women's development and their relevance to our college population; we continue to define their translation to our clinical work. As we apply our understandings in the psychology of women to the training program, we begin to develop principles of theory and practice in training counselors of women. The training program presented above is a description of how far we have come. Our intent is to define and test effective principles and procedures for training counselors of women and to make our findings available to others.

Required Readings

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